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Evangelical Anti-Zionism as an Adaptive Response to Shifts in American Cultural Attitudes

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INTRODUCTION

Since the founding of the Jewish state in 1948, Evangelical Protestants in the United States have been regarded—with good reason—as Israel's most reliable supporters. In 2008, Jody C. Baumgartner and a number of other researchers reported that Evangelicals are "more likely than other Americans to have sympathy for Israel in its dispute with the Palestinians and to agree that the United States should take Israel's side more often in the Middle East."[1] More recently, a poll conducted by the Pew Charitable Trust indicated that Evangelicals are more likely than other American Jews to believe that God gave the land to the Jewish people.[2]

In addition to the belief that God's promises endure forever, much Evangelical support for Israel is motivated by an understanding of the religious component of Arab hostility toward Israel. Evangelicals, Baumgartner and her colleagues reported, are "significantly more likely than other Americans to agree that Islam is a more violent religion than Christianity, Judaism, or Hinduism."[3] Other factors related to Evangelical support for Israel include an adherence to premillenial dispensationalism (an eschatology that posits that the return of the Jews to their homeland is a precursor to the return of Jesus Christ),[4] gratitude to the Jewish people for their scriptures, and remorse over the Holocaust.[5]

From the Zionist perspective, Evangelical support for Israel is a good thing. It is not, however, an unalloyed good, because a growing number of Americans regard Evangelicals with suspicion and contempt. Anti-Israel activists take advantage of this contempt in their effort to portray support for Israel as a regressive and retrograde cause.

Nevertheless, this community represents a significant segment of the American population and the American voting public.[6] Its members devote time, energy, and money to pro-Israel activism, as witnessed by the growth of such organizations as Christians United for Israel,[7] the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, the Jerusalem Connection, and the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews—all of which rely on Evangelical support.

Robert O. Smith, author of a recent book on Christian Zionism More Desired than Our Owne Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism (Oxford University Press, 2013), may be overstating the point only mildly when he writes, "The most conspicuous contribution evangelical politics have made to American life is the promotion of unwavering U.S. support for the state of Israel."[8]

Despite this support for Israel, there are unmistakable signs that anti-Israel activism is gaining traction within evangelical Protestantism in the United States, particularly in its megachurch segment. A coalition of supersessionist theologians, liberal activists, and Palestinian Christians is reaching out—with increasing effectiveness—to young adults who have become disaffected from the Evangelical community into which they are born. As a result, the institutions of American Evangelicalism, like mainline Protestantism before it, are becoming persistent and vocal sources of anti-Israel messaging on the American scene.

An unmistakable increase in anti-Zionist activism is taking place against the backdrop of demographic and ideological shifts in American Evangelicalism. Older Evangelicals who were alive during the Holocaust or who were witness to Israel's creation in 1948 and Arab efforts to destroy the Jewish state in 1967 and 1973 are dying off and being replaced by a younger generation of churchgoers who lack first-hand knowledge of this history and who, as a result, are willing to give a sympathetic hearing to anti-Israel narratives, no matter how distorted. Concomitant with these demographic changes is the embarrassment over Evangelicalism's reputation for its affiliation with the American Right. As a result, the U.S. evangelical community is shifting to the center from its traditional place on the political and theological right.

David Brog, executive director of Christians United for Israel, offered this warning to Jim Fletcher, a journalist who has documented the growth of anti-Zionism in the evangelical community: "Anti-Israel activists are making surprising inroads into the evangelical community, especially among the Millennial generation. They are telling lies about Israel. But their lies are hitting the right moral notes and they are making progress. We ignore them at our peril."[9]

In sum, American Evangelicalism is no longer the bulwark of support for Israel it once was.

The question presented to observers is how this turn of events came about. For decades, the underlying circumstances of the Arab-Israeli conflict have not changed substantively. Arab and Muslim hostility toward Israel and Jews—one of the primary drivers of the conflict—has not diminished, but rather increased in recent

years. Violence against Christians has also gotten worse in Muslim-majority countries throughout the world, indicating what would happen to Jews should they lose their state.

Moreover, Israel remains a beacon for human rights in the Middle East, treating its enemies, dissidents, minorities and its own citizens—women especially—with greater respect than every other country or political regime in the region. Israel has proven itself to be an astounding success, while its adversaries have proven unable to adapt to the modern world. And despite all this, we are confronted with a growing movement within American Evangelism that assails Israel while apologizing for its enemies. What is going on here?

It is fruitless to seek an explanation for this turn of events in the Middle East itself. Only a close look at recent events in American society will help us understand this anti-Zionist drift in the Evangelical community. As it turns out, anti-Zionism is an adaptive response to changes in American society that threaten to isolate Evangelicals in the United States from their compatriots—and the movement's leaders from its young people. Young Evangelicals—and leaders who seek their support—embrace anti-Zionism as a way of signaling that they are not the Bible-thumping fundamentalists of yore.

2010: EVANGELICAL INTIFADA BEGINS

The beginnings of what some commentators have called the "Evangelical Intifada" can already be seen in 2010.[10] This was the year that With God on Our Side (an anti-Zionist film discussed at length below) was released. It was also the year of the first Christ at the Checkpoint conference that took place Bethlehem. This event, which was attended by approximately 250 people from 20 different countries, was organized by the Bethlehem Bible College (which at the time was led by Bishara Awad) and the Holy Land Trust, a so-called peacemaking organization led by Bishara's son, Sami Awad.[11]

The conference, which was targeted at evangelical Protestants, presented messages that undermined the legitimacy of the Jewish people and of their state. For example, Mitri Raheb, a Lutheran pastor in Bethlehem, reported that "Israel represents Rome of the Bible, not the people of the land" and that Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu really is not a Jew with legitimate ties to Israel, because he "comes from an East European tribe who converted to Judaism in the Middle Ages." [12]

Naim Ateek, founder of Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem, told the audience that modern Israel is in the grip of a tribal understanding of God. Along these lines, Manfred Kohl, a supersessionist theologian from Germany, told the audience that Palestinians are experiencing a "holocaust action" at the hands of Israeli Jews who, because of their tribal self-understanding, think they are "superior, better, or even 'chosen' by God."

Muslim apologist Colin Chapman reported that suicide bombings are prohibited by normative Islam and are motivated by despair, and that, if Israel had abided by UN Resolution 242, Hamas would never have come into existence. And Sami Awad declared that if there is to be peace between Israel and the Palestinians, Israeli Jews need to recover from the Holocaust and stop thinking that the Palestinians want to destroy them.

In addition to assailing the legitimacy of the Jewish people and their state, Palestinian Christians who spoke at the 2010 Christ at the Checkpoint Conference castigated Christian Zionists for embracing notions of "nationalist chauvinism on the one hand, and violence on the other."

GATHERING STEAM IN 2012

Aside from articles in Sojourners, a magazine that caters to liberal Evangelicals, the 2010 conference received sparse coverage, but the 2012 Christ at the Checkpoint Conference can be legitimately described as a watershed moment for the cause of anti-Zionism in American Evangelicalism. The March 2012 conference attracted approximately 600 attendees, including a contingent of 35 students from Wheaton College, which has been referred to as the "Evangelical Vatican."[13] A few of these students wore keffiyehs to demonstrate their solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

The suspicious attitude of the conference organizers toward the Jewish state was revealed in an email sent to attendees approximately two weeks prior to the conference. In the email, one conference organizer, a Sabeel activist, instructed registrants to be less than truthful when dealing with security officials upon entrance to Israel. The email stated, "For your information, when you arrive at the Ben Gurion Airport and you are asked about the reason for your visit, DO NOT mention the conference or Bethlehem. Only say that you are here to see the holy sites or that you [are] here on a Christian pilgrimage. Do not give more information than asked for."

These instructions probably did more to excite fear and anxiety on the part of the conference attendees than they did to keep the conference off the radar of Israeli officials. It is not as if the 2012 Christ at the Checkpoint Conference was a secret—it had been widely publicized. If the goal were to keep it a secret, then how does one explain the next sentence of the email, which instructed attendees who made arrangements through Holy Land Trust to be picked up at the airport to "look for a representative holding a CATC sign"?

The main topic of discussion at the 2012 conference was about how Christians should relate to a state founded and inhabited by Jews who reject Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior. The overarching message of the conference was that the Jewish state stood in opposition to God's purposes for humanity. The message was conveyed in a banner that dominated the front of the hall where the conference took place. It showed a church and a cross standing in opposition to, and in judgment of, a particularly menacing section of the security barrier. Conversely, the security barrier could be seen as an obstacle to God's purposes for the Holy Land.

Attendees were told that Evangelical support for Israel is an obstacle to the spread of Christianity in the Muslim-dominated Middle East. This message was offered by Rev. Samih Mouris, an evangelical pastor from Egypt who addressed the audience through a video interview recorded a few months before the conference. Mouris said that rage caused by the support for Israel in its "unjust claims" by what Arabs regard as Christian countries undermines the abilities of evangelical Christians to carry the Gospel in the region. Western support for Israel, Mouris stated, "is a serious stumbling block before the Gospel in Arab society." Christian Zionism, Mouris said, "greatly affects negatively the evangelical Church in the Arab world, especially in Egypt where there is a vast number of Christians."[14] With this statement, Mouris articulated a central, but implicit theme of

the conference: evangelical Christians in the United States and Europe must choose between spreading the Gospel to Muslims in the Middle East and supporting the Jewish state against its enemies in the region.

At times during the conference, Palestinian Christians invoked imagery from the New Testament to demonize Israel. One of the offenders on this score was Bethlehem Mayor Victor Batarseh, a Roman Catholic who was formerly a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. [15] (The PFLP is the group responsible for the murder of Leon Kinghoffer on the Achille Lauro in 1985 and for numerous suicide bombings that killed Israelis during the Second Intifada.) During his talk, which took place the first night of the conference, Batarseh told the audience that the Palestinians were being "crucified" by Israeli security measures, Bethlehem was a giant prison and that Jesus Christ, embodied by the Palestinian people, was imprisoned in the city by the security barrier. Yohanna Katanacho was another Palestinian Christian who used imagery from the New Testament to demonize Israel. During his presentation, Katanacho displayed a cartoon of Mary and Joseph being denied access to the Bethlehem by the security barrier. And, as in 2010, Colin Chapman appeared at the 2012 conference and downplayed the impact of Islamist ideology regarding the Jewish people on the Arab-Israeli conflict, suggesting that if Israel had not invaded Lebanon in 1982, Hezbollah might not exist.

CATC AND PROTEST TOURISM

Between the talks, conference attendees went on a variety of side trips designed to highlight Palestinian, but not Israeli, suffering. For example, volunteers from the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel led attendees of a tour of security barrier and checkpoint between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The Israeli Committee against Home Demolitions brought people on tours of East Jerusalem and settlements in the West Bank, and the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, an organization that has attempted to erase the Jewish history of Hebron,[16] led a tour of that city. During none of these tours was the perspective of mainstream Israeli Jews presented. For example, the Christ at the Checkpoint Conference did not organize any trips to Sderot where Israeli Jews have been subjected to rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip.[17]

Gary Burge, did however, bring his students to Abraham's Tomb during the conference. At the tomb, he and his students spoke with an Israeli settler who reinforced Burge's depiction of settlers as an obstacle to peace. When asked by Luke Moon from the Institute on Religion and Democracy if he had met with any Islamists such as a representative from Hamas or Islamic Jihad, Burge said "no." Moon pushed him, asking why not, for if the settlers represent the biggest obstacle to peace on the Israeli side, why not introduce your students to the Palestinian equivalent? Moon reports: "He brushed me off saying, 'I think we know their view.'"[18]

These trips can be characterized as what Ardie Geldman, a committed Israel advocate, has described as "protest tourism." In an essay published in The New English Review, Geldman describes protest tourism as part of "a worldwide trend of bringing foreign visitors to Third World areas to bear witness to the injustices being inflicted upon a particular population, to express solidarity with this population, possibly to partake in a protest demonstration, and perhaps to volunteer, albeit briefly, in some local human welfare or educational project. Participants in these short tours are typically, but not limited to, members of churches, student organizations and assorted 'social justice" groups.'"[19]

The Bethlehem Bible College (which has become a nexus point for anti-Zionist activism directed at American Evangelicals) is organizing a third Christ at the Checkpoint conference scheduled to take place in March 2014. Several of the speakers who appeared at the previous two conferences, such as Gary Burge, Yohanna Katanacho and Sami Awad, are scheduled to appear at the 2014 event, indicating that the agenda will remain largely unchanged.[20]

WITH GOD ON OUR SIDE

One of the main organizers of the 2012 conference was Porter Speakman, Jr., a filmmaker who has proven adept at presenting to young Evangelicals a distorted narrative of the Arab-Israeli conflict. His skill can be seen in his movie With God on Our Side (Rooftop Productions, 2010), which in many respects provided a model for the story offered at the Christ at the Checkpoint Conference in 2012.

The movie follows the crisis of conscience of the narrator, Christopher Harrell, a twenty-something graphic designer who starts out as a strong supporter of Israel. As the movie progresses Harrell reports re-evaluating his support for Israel as he becomes aware of Palestinian suffering. Eventually, Harrell casts off his juvenile and unreflective support for the Jewish people and the modern state of Israel and embraces a mature understanding of his Christian faith and of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Predictably, his new understanding of the conflict omits any reference to the role Islamist ideology plays in fomenting violence against the Jewish state. By the end of the movie, the narrator has exchanged his Christian guilt over the Holocaust for guilt over Palestinian suffering. He has also traded his previous support for Israel for ardent and unreflective support of the Palestinian cause and indifference to the safety and wellbeing of Jews.

In addition to offering a distorted history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the movie portrays two well-known Christian Zionists, John Hagee, founder of Christians United for Israel and Malcom Hedding from the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, as war-mongering bigots who are out of touch with the suffering of Palestinians and who privilege their end-time beliefs over the needs of flesh-and-blood human beings living in the Middle East.

Harrell is able to find a path to peace in the Middle East after meeting with Norman Finkelstein, Ilan Pappé, supersessionist Evangelicals Gary Burge and Stephen Sizer, and the youthful anti-Israel polemicist Ben White of Britain.

In sum, the movie, which has been shown to audiences at Wheaton College in Illinois and throughout the United States, Britain and Ireland, depicts Christian support for Israel as a worn-out, irresponsible cause and pro-Palestinian activism as the “next big thing” for young Evangelicals.[21] This movie, which was shown at the Christ at the Checkpoint Conference in 2012, has been endorsed by Steve Haas, vice president for World Vision, a prominent Evangelical relief and development agency. The movie has established Speakman—who has refused to disclose the identity of the people who funded the movie—as one of the most prominent anti-Israel activists in American Evangelicalism.

ANTI-ZIONISM AS CIVIL RIGHTS

Anti-Israel propaganda may also be seen in another movie geared toward young Evangelicals—Little Town of Bethlehem. Ethnographic Media Films, funded by Mart Green whom Jim Fletcher reports is "founder and CEO of Mardel Christian Book chain and heir to Hobby Lobby retail chain," produced this 2010 movie. The movie portrays the push for Palestinian statehood as akin to the struggle of African Americans to achieve civil rights in the United States in the 1960s. To that end, it uses the teachings of Martin Luther King Jr. and Ghandi to highlight Israel's alleged misdeeds but it does not use them to assess the behavior of groups like Hamas or Hezbollah, despite the fact that its director, Jim Hanon, met with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah during the filmmaking process. He told Evangelical journalist Jim Fletcher that "just on a personal level," he found Nasrallah, "remarkable."[22] The film, which has reportedly been shown in public screenings at least 400 times, also makes troubling use of computer-generated graphics to project images of Mary and Joseph onto the concrete sections of the security barrier. The effect of these images it to cast Israel in the role of the Roman occupiers of Bethlehem at the time of Christ's birth.

The notion that the Palestinian cause is akin to the fight for civil rights in the United States during the 1960s seems to be gaining traction in Evangelical circles. For example, Donald Miller, author of Blue Like Jazz, a 2003 best-selling religious biography popular with young, left-leaning Evangelicals, recently wrote a long blog entry about the Arab-Israeli conflict in which he reports, "The situation [feels] more like the United States before the civil rights era, only more bloody."[23] In the entry, which was based on his experiences of a trip organized by the Telos Group, an activist organization that has received funding from George Soros,[24] Miller reported the conflict was not a religious war, but instead "has as much to do with race, language, culture and land as it does with religion."

Miller's statement lacks merit, for at least two reasons. First, Miller was born in 1971, which was well after the start of the civil rights movement in the U.S., making it impossible for him to know what that era "felt like." Second, and more importantly, the push for voting and other civil rights in the United States in the 1960s was not accompanied by calls for genocide against the American people, as have been heard against Jews in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In the blog entry, Miller asks "How many pictures of dead Palestinian babies will Americans tolerate?" and states, "This is not your grandmother's Israel." Along these lines, he complains that for many Christians, "the nation state of Israel has been reduced to a good luck charm, a rabbits [sic] foot they rub in order to be blessed." This is a clear condemnation of the previous generations of Evangelicals who supported Israel and an echo of the message given in With God on Our
Side.

Prominent Evangelical scholars David Gushee and Glenn Stassen embraced a similar gambit in an open letter to Christian Zionists in September 2011. The rhetorical goal of this letter was to give Evangelicals justification for reducing their support for Israel in a manner that allows the rest of their Evangelical identity to remain unchanged.[25] In one version of the letter, the authors report that they are both strong supporters of Israel who were forced to express their doubts about Evangelical support for Israel once they "saw Israeli settlements and bypass roads consuming the land that would belong to any viable Palestinian state." In the other version of the letter, the authors issue a distorted litany of Israeli misdeeds and blame them on maximalist Jewish Zionists. They then state that their letter is "not about religious Jewish Zionism and its destructive effects on Israeli

policy" but is instead "about the Christian version of the same belief [….] which underwrites theft of Palestinian land and oppression of Palestinian people, helps create the conditions for an explosion of violence, and pushes U.S. policy in a destructive direction that violates our nations commitment to universal human rights." The authors conclude that "In all of these, American Christian Zionism as it currently stands, is sinful and produces sin."

In neither of these letters do Gushee and Stassen acknowledge the misdeeds of Israel's adversaries, nor do they address the role that Muslim doctrine regarding Jews and Islamist ideology plays in fomenting violence against Israel. For Gushee and Stassen, these problems are unremarkable. The only people whom they chastise are Israelis and their Christian Zionist supporters. On this score, the narrative offered by the two authors is indistinguishable from the story told by mainstream Protestant peacemakers about the Arab-Israeli conflict. It would have been inconceivable in previous decades for two prominent Evangelical scholars to proffer such a narrative about the Arab-Israeli conflict. Not any more.[26]

MEGACHURCHES

Anti-Israel messaging has also gained ground in the megachurch movement, an important sub-segment of Evangelical Protestantism in the United States. Megachurches, which are defined as having more than 2,000 people in attendance on a Sunday morning, predominate in the Evangelical stronghold of the U.S. Southern Sunbelt states. These churches are typically led by charismatic male pastors who are adept at quickly attracting large numbers of congregants.[27]

Increased megachurch support for the anti-Zionist narrative is evidenced by the participation of Bob Roberts, Joel Hunter and Lynne Hybels at the 1012 Christ at the Checkpoint Conference. Another data point demonstrating the growth of anti-Zionism in the megachurch movement is the alliance between supersessionist theologian Gary Burge and Bill Hybels, who is Lynne Hybels' husband and founder of Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago, which is often described as one of the most influential churches in the country.

The participation of these leaders in the megachurch community is particularly problematic, because churches are tech-savvy and growing. They are, in the words of researchers at Hartford Seminary, "wired" and have proven highly adept at using modern technology and media to bring followers into the Christian faith.[28] Such skills are transferable to the cause of promoting a distorted view of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This is evident in the "Bethlehem Caught in the Crossfire"[29] video produced in 2010 by Kensington Church. This institution has 10,000 members at its main campus in Troy, Michigan and has spun off several other churches in Michigan. "Bethlehem Caught in the Crossfire" features multiple falsifications—all of which cut against Israel. For example, it describes the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as "coming along" after the Six Day War, which took place in 1967, when in fact, the PLO was founded in 1964.

By dating the PLO's founding after the Six Day War, the video gives the false impression that it was launched in response to Israel taking possession of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In fact, the PLO's founding was

not a response to Israel's "occupation" of these territories, but was motivated, rather, by a rejection of Israel's right to exist.

In addition to stating falsely that when construction on the security barrier is finished, it will "completely surround" Bethlehem, the video also reports—incorrectly—that the population of Christians in Bethlehem and the West Bank is "plummeting" when in absolute numbers, the population of Christians living in the West Bank has increased under Israeli control, a fact acknowledged by the Diyar Institute, a pro-Palestinian organization founded by Mitri Raheb.[30]

To buttress its false narrative about the decline of Christians in the West Bank, the video relies on testimony from the previously mentioned Bethlehem mayor Victor Batarseh. At the risk of belaboring the point, the notion that Evangelicals would regard such a figure as a credible source of information about the Arab-Israeli conflict and American interests in the region, would have been, up until recently, inconceivable.

As the evidence mounts, the conclusion becomes increasingly difficult to ignore: American Evangelicalism, like mainline Protestantism in the United States now has a self-sustaining anti-Zionist wing capable of making itself heard with increasing resonance.

A CONTEXTUALIZATION

The "Evangelical Intifada" is best understood in the context of the conflict between Protestant fundamentalism and modernity that came to a head in the 1920s. As it became clear that conservative or "fundamentalist" Protestants[31] who had previously played an influential—if not dominant—role in American society were on the losing end of a culture war with the forces of modernity,[32] they pursued a strategy of separatism. It was the 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial that prompted fundamentalism to detach from mainstream American society.[33]

The fundamentalist strategy of separatism was legitimated by the previously mentioned theology of premillenial dispensationalism, which predicted that Jesus would return after a period of conflict and tribulation. With its pessimistic view of history, premillenial dispensationalism encouraged its adherents to remain as a faithful evangelizing remnant while the world collapsed around them. This theology legitimated the fundamentalist decision to stand aloof from American society, reports American sociologist Christian Smith, because it "had already rejected the truth, and since such engagement might lead to one's own intellectual and spiritual contamination." Smith writes, "The perspective of many fundamentalists became: let the worldly intelligentsia, scholars, universities, media, cultural elite, and politicians—all who had spurned Christian truth and civilization—go to perdition."[34]

In order to maintain this separation, Smith reports, conservative Evangelicals embraced a set of behavioral rules that prohibited drinking and smoking, and
required modest dress. Alongside an insistence on doctrinal purity, these rules helped maintain a boundary between their community and the rest of American society and from other Christians who did not isolate themselves from non-Christians.

The total effect was powerful and conspicuous. By the end of the 1930s, much of conservative Protestantism—under the banner of fundamentalism—had evolved into a somewhat reclusive and defensive version of its nineteenth-century self. Organizationally, fundamentalism was expanding and strengthening […]. But in spirit and culture, much of fundamentalism seemed to have become withdrawn, defensive, judgmental, brooding, self-righteous, anti-intellectual, paranoid and pessimistic.[35]

By the 1940s, a group of moderate fundamentalists, "who had grown weary of their own tradition …. [b]egan to formulate a critique of their own fundamentalist subculture and a vision for its transformation," Smith reports. These leaders, worked to "transform the character of conservative Protestantism" after concluding that the "factionalist, separatist, judgmental character of fundamentalism itself had become an insurmountable impediment" to effective evangelization." Instead of distancing themselves from American society, it was time for Christians to engage with the world around them. The result was the establishment of the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942 and the rise to prominence of mainstream evangelists such as Billy Graham.[36] Within a few decades, these leaders (Graham especially) had created a new movement that we recognize today as American Evangelicalism.[37]

Citing British historian David Bebbington, Wendy Murray Zoba characterizes Evangelicalism as adhering to conversionism (a belief "that lives need to be transformed through a 'born-again' experience"); activism (the belief that "the expression of the Gospel through missionary and social reform efforts"); Biblicism ("a particular regard for the Bible as the ultimate authority"); and crucicentrism ("a stress on the sacrifice on the cross as making possible the redemption of humanity").[38] Another important marker of Evangelical identity is a belief in exclusivity, or the notion that the only path to salvation is through belief in Jesus Christ.[39]

In addition to these doctrinal markers that set them off from mainline Protestants, American Evangelicals also maintained a distinctive identity within American society with their political stances that included ardent opposition to Communism, legalized abortion, and more recently, gay marriage and Islamism. Support for these stances is not universal, for while American Evangelicalism is largely a conservative movement, it is not a monolithic one. It has (as will be discussed below) a left-wing, a right-wing, and a center (which according to David Gushee, is achieving increased prominence in American political and religious life.[40]

PREMILLENIAL DISPENSATIONALISM

Many American Evangelicals have maintained their adherence to premillenial dispensationalism, which encouraged ardent support for the Jewish state. Support for premillenial dispensationalism did not, however, extend across the board. Like other manifestations of the Christian faith, American Evangelicalism has had its supersessionists who remind their fellows that Jews rejected—and continue to reject—Jesus as the Messiah. They then argue that as a result their rejection of Jesus, modern-day Jews have no legitimate claim to promises made to Abraham in the Book of Genesis and in other books of the Hebrew Scripture. For commentators such as Gary Burge and Stephen Sizer, Christian Zionism is a heresy that displaces Jesus Christ from the center of the Christian faith.[41]

For their part, Christian Zionists argue that Israel's restoration is prophesized in the Old Testament and that God's promises to the Jews endure forever.[42] Evangelical supersessionists argue that God's promises to the

Jews have been "fulfilled" and offered to all of humanity through Jesus Christ and then accuse their opponents of embracing a "dual-covenant" covenant theology in which God has one plan of salvation for Jews and another for everyone else.[43] Other less hostile commentators—both Christian and Jewish—express horror at the thought of Christians justifying settlement construction with appeals to Scripture, using the Bible to predict a showdown with Islam and of Christians, waiting hopefully for Armageddon[44]—or worse, actively trying to bring it about.[45]

Despite these criticisms, grass-roots support in American Evangelicalism has gone to the pro-Israel restorationists. Israel's establishment in 1948 and its capture of Jerusalem in 1967 made it acceptable for Christians to believe that, after all, the Jewish people were not cast off and still had a role to play in God's plan for humanity.

This helps explain the success of a genre of books that traffics in Biblical prophecy such as Hal Lindsey's, The Late Great Planet Earth,[46] and the more recent, Left Behind,[47] series, which attempt to explain or depict events on the world stage, particularly in the Middle East, through a lens of Biblical prophecy. The people who write and read these books not only believe that Israel had a role to play in God's plan for salvation, they also believe that they can use passages from the Bible to discern how God's plan is working on the world stage in the modern era.

The popularity of Biblical prophecy has been a source of much distress for Christian intellectuals and theologians,[48] but this genre retains its adherents because it affirms in a detailed manner a message that people like hearing: God is in charge and when history comes to a close, the good guys (Evangelicals, especially) will win, and the bad guys (the anti-Christ and his minions) will lose.

The fact that the scenarios offered by premillenial dispensationalists change from one era (or decade) to the next does not diminish the popularity of these books. The books are valuable not because they offer the precise date of the Rapture, accurately reveal the identity of the anti-Christ, or correctly delineate what modern-day countries are being referred to by passages in Ezekiel that invoke Gog and Magog. Their value lies in that they help Evangelicals maintain their identity by providing clear boundaries between themselves and the rest of American society and from non-Evangelical Christians. In other words, these books do for modern-day Evangelicalism what decades ago premillenial theology did for Fundamentalists: serve as markers that distinguish Evangelicals from outsiders.

"Prophecy writers," writes Glenn W. Shuck, "specialize in articulating and defending by ferreting out hidden sources of evil in their midst, encouraging readers to construct their identities by determining what they are not. This process includes the setting of firm symbolic boundaries between those within the evangelical community and outsiders who do not."[49] In other words, belief in the applicability of Biblical prophecy served to keep the American Evangelicalism "embattled and thriving."[50]

In sum, the story of American Evangelicalism can be characterized as follows: After transcending the isolation of its fundamentalist roots, American Evangelicalism, by emphasizing its distinctive characteristics, and especially its Biblical and political conservativism (and its support for Israel), was able to maintain itself as a

vibrant and influential subculture in American society, with is members exhibiting higher levels of group participation than adherents of mainstream and fundamentalist churches in the United States.[51]

EVANGELICALS NOT MONOLITHIC

As stated above, American Evangelicalism is by no means monolithic. David P. Gushee in The Future of Faith in American Politics: The Public Witness of the Evangelical Center[52] documented that the movement had its left and right wings and a center.

The Evangelical Right, which includes groups such as Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council, and the Moral Majority, has played a leading part in American politics. The right wing of American Evangelicalism, which does battle with secularist influence on society by promoting family values, opposing the teaching of evolution in schools, gay marriage and legalized abortion, owes its role in American politics to an outstanding ability to galvanize voters in state and national elections. Jerry Falwell, founder of the Moral Majority (who died in 2007) was a well-known leader of this wing of American Evangelicalism. This sector, which controls a substantial organizational infrastructure to get its message out, is demonstrably more supportive of Israel (and the U.S.) than the Evangelical Left.[53]

The Evangelical Left embraces a critique of American society and foreign
policy and American support for Israel that resembles that of mainline Protestants. Sojourners, a magazine (with a circulation of approximately 35,000)[54] edited by Jim Wallis, is the flagship publication of this movement. Along with Wallis, Tony Campolo is a prominent leader of the Evangelical Left, whom Gushee describes
as committed to fighting poverty and promoting social and racial justice. The Evangelical Left does not have the institutional clout enjoyed by the right wing
of the community, and works to overcome this limitation by making common cause with the secular Left and mainstream Protestants.[55] Spector estimates that
the Evangelical Left comprises less than three percent of the American population.[56]

The Evangelical Center, as described (and promoted) by Gushee, shares with the Evangelical Right a concern for the family and opposition to abortion and gay marriage, but diverges from the right in its desire not to focus on these issues narrowly. The Evangelical Center, Gushee reports, embraces to the Evangelical Left's "opposition to the routine resort to war and [its] willingness to dissent from at least some U.S. wars"[57] but is more "muted" in its criticism of American foreign policy,[58] and "does not resonate with the Left's tilt toward the Palestinians in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."[59] On both the Left and the Right, growing numbers of Evangelicals are shifting to the center, Gushee reports, and as a result, this segment of Evangelicalism exerts influence in a number of media outlets such as Christianity Today, a magazine that was formerly part of the hard-right but which under the leadership of former editor David Neff, proved itself "increasingly willing to take the gloves off and explicitly confront the evangelical right."[60,61]

EVANGELICAL OPPOSION TO ISRAEL

Evangelical support for Israel does not extend across the board. One gathering point for opponents of Evangelical support for Israel is Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding (EMEU). This organization, founded in 1986, has promoted the so-called peacemaking message offered Palestinian Christians to Evangelical Protestants in the United States and has also organized tours to the Middle East for Evangelical pastors and activists. The group's agenda, like that of many other Christian peacemaking organizations, is to hold Israel to a higher standard of conduct, and its adversaries to no standard at all. Another aspect of the group's activism is a tendency to interrogate Christian Zionism and Israel's Jewish identity while ignoring the role of Muslim doctrine regarding Jews (and Christians) and that which Islamist ideology plays in fomenting violence in the Middle East.[62]

According to Burge, who has been involved with the organization since its founding, EMEU started to gain influence in the early 1990s—at about the same time that Evangelical scholars launched a sustained theological critique of premillenial dispensationalism. This critique started to gather momentum, Burge reports, in 1992 when Zondervan, a conservative Evangelical publisher, published his text Who Are God's People in the Middle East. He states that when his book went to Zondervan's publishing board for approval, "there was an outrageous debate." He continues:

Were they willing to break ranks with the dispensationalists and be criticized for publishing something that would criticize the standard Evangelical view? Zondervan made that decision […] Zondervan continued to represent a critical position on this [issue].

The Evangelical critique of premillenial dispensationalism gained further credibility, Burge reports, when Intervarsity Press, a mainstream publisher, issued The Land of Promise (2000), edited by Philip Johnston and Peter Walker. Burge adds that the Evangelical critique of Israel gained more currency when former President Jimmy Carter, an Evangelical Baptist, published Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid (Simon &Schuster, 2006).[63]

These qualifications not withstanding, American Evangelicalism has, for most of the last five decades, has been able to maintain its identity as a distinct and influential force in American society that has typically embraced premillenial dispensationalism and has been largely supportive of Israel.

WEARY OF THEIR OWN TRADTION

Nonetheless, change is coming. The characteristics that served Evangelicalism so well during the twentieth century have become liabilities in the twenty-first as modern-day Evangelicalism finds itself embroiled in a culture war of its own. This conflict is taking place between Evangelicals and a growing number of Americans who embrace a post-modernist worldview and exhibit a greater tolerance toward homosexuality.[64] The conflict is not merely between Evangelicals and American society, but between the movement and its young.

There is a growing sense of crisis within American Evangelicalism, an inability to maintain the allegiance and participation of young people who are born into the faith. Part of the problem appears to be that young Evangelicals are internalizing the contempt directed at their community by growing numbers of non-Evangelical Americans.[65]

A divergence between the theological and political beliefs adhered to by young Evangelicals and the teachings of the church into which they are born—teachings that are rejected by their non-Evangelical peers—is another factor contributing to this crisis of recruitment "[M]any young Christians and ex-Christians feel as though the church makes them choose between faithfulness to friends and faithfulness to faith," reports David Kinnaman.[66]

Kinnaman (and Lyons) are not the only commentators who have observed this relationship. Kevin DeYoung writes, "As younger generations come up against an increasingly hostile cultural environment, they are breaking in one of two directions—back to robust orthodoxy (often Reformed), or back to liberalism. The neo-Evangelical consensus is cracking up."[67] And in December 2012, John S. Dickerson lamented that "a majority of young people raised as evangelicals are quitting the church, and often the faith, entirely." He adds: "Evangelicals have not adapted well to rapid shifts in the culture—including, notably, the move toward support for same-sex marriage. The result is that evangelicals are increasingly typecast as angry and repressed bigots."[68]

This crisis is particularly urgent for Evangelical leaders because young Evangelicals (like other young people in the United States) are taking longer to start careers, get married and have children than previous generations. These delays, which result in couples having fewer children, are having a negative impact on religious participation.[69]

Gay marriage is the wedge issue that is dividing Evangelicals from mainstream American society. Polling data obtained in a federally funded survey indicates that in 1988, eighty-five percent of American Evangelicals (or "Born Again" Christians) are opposed to the legalization of gay marriage, as compared to 67 percent of non-Evangelical white Americans. In 2010, Evangelical opposition had dropped to 59 percent, while opposition among non-Evangelicals dropped to 31 percent.[70] The issue of gay marriage is also causing a rift between different generations of Evangelicals. In 2010, opposition to gay marriage among Evangelicals between the ages of 18 and 35 (44%) was lower than it was among Evangelicals 36 and older (63%). Among non-Evangelical whites between the ages of 18 and 36, opposition to gay marriage was only 12 percent.[71]

These cleavages force modern-day Evangelicalism into a predicament similar to the one confronted by Fundamentalists in the 1940s. As growing numbers of people, inside and outside the community, regard Evangelicalism as a judgmental, retrograde and hostile source of bigotry in American society, the movement has moved to the defensive. In response, yet another crop of leaders who have "grown weary of their own tradition," has risen up to make substantive changes in the way their faith is practiced and to refashion the movement's relationship with the world around it.[72]

THE RESPONSE

Elites within the Evangelical community are responding to the crisis outlined above in a variety of ways. Some leaders, such as Brian McLaren are arguing that it is time to change the church's doctrine regarding homosexuality even if it means leaving the fold of the institutional Evangelical community.[73] Others, like Tony Campolo, are staking out a middle ground in which he affirms biblical teachings regarding homosexuality as a sin, while at the same time acknowledging that Evangelicals need to be more affirming of gay, lesbian and

bisexual people.[74] Others, such as Kinnaman[75] state that while Evangelicals have been unduly harsh in their rhetoric regarding gays and lesbians, they cannot abandon the traditional understanding of homosexuality as a sin.

The editorial line of Christianity Today appears to be that gays and lesbians who are unable to form a union with someone of the opposite sex are called by the church to remain celibate. According to this worldview, Christians are called to stand lovingly with gays and lesbians as they struggle with their sexual identity.[76]

The challenge facing Evangelical leaders is that there is an upper limit to how far they can accommodate the ongoing shift in public opinion regarding homosexuality without acceding to a revolutionary change in the way their community interprets the Bible, because both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are fairly clear in their assessment of homosexuality as a sin. And, as noted above, Evangelical identity is strongly linked to an emphasis on the Bible as a reliable guide to belief and practice.

Consequently, Evangelical leaders and young people are caught in a dilemma. If they maintain their Biblical faith, they risk being isolated from mainstream American society. If they accommodate public opinion with regard to homosexuality, they risk becoming unmoored from the faith of their fathers and ostracized from the community into which they were born.

In response to this dilemma, young Evangelicals are seeking a way to convince people outside their community that they are not like those "other" retrograde, gay-hating Evangelicals.[77] The desire to differentiate themselves from the Evangelical community can be seen in the "emerging" church movement, which D.A. Carson characterizes as a protest against Protestant orthodoxy, and in the pages of Relevant magazine, which caters to millenials who are looking for ways to remain connected to American society without abandoning their faith.

Tony Campolo gave voice to these concerns at the 2012 Christ at the Checkpoint Conference that took place in Bethlehem in March 2012. In his presentation, he lamented the suspicion he had to overcome when speaking on college campuses in the U.S. "The word 'Evangelical' has collected a lot of ugly baggage," he said. "When I go to speak at a place like Dartmouth College or Harvard University, the red flags go up. Immediately I am defined as a Christian who is anti-women, anti-gay, pro-war, anti-Arab. It goes and on." Campolo continued:

And I have to stand back and say, "That's not who I am." And I'm tired of having to explain myself and I think a lot of Evangelicals who are not anti-women, anti-gay, anti-environmental, anti-Arab have a hard time explaining themselves. So a group of us sat together and said, "Can we come up with a new name?" We got a new name from a secular Jewish country and western disc jockey in Nashville, Tennessee [laughter] who began to refer to us as "Red Letter Christians." You know the old bibles that have the words [of Jesus] in red letters. We're going to be red letter Christians. We're going to take the red letters of the bible seriously. We're going to take the Sermon on the Mount seriously.[78]

Campolo wasn't alone in his effort to distance himself from the dominant strains of Evangelicalism. Addressing the same conference a few days before Campolo's appearance, Shane Claiborne, another liberal Evangelical, cited polling data from the Barna Group[79] indicating that among young people in the United

States, Christians are typically viewed as anti-gay, judgmental, and hypocritical."I'll stop there 'cause the list doesn't get much better," he said. "It showed that we have a really bad image crisis and that we Christians have become known more for what we are against than what we are for."[80]

The implication was obvious: Engaging in pro-Palestinian (or more accurately, anti-Israel) activism provided Evangelicals embarrassed by the reputation of their community to communicate to the rest of American society an opportunity to demonstrate that they are not like those "other" off-putting gay-hating, Armageddon-seeking Evangelicals about whom everyone complains.

It should be noted that such a response is not unique to the American experience. Jews, for example, have responded similarly to the burdens placed on Jewish identity by decades of anti-Israel propaganda proffered by Arabs and Muslims by distancing themselves from the Jewish state (or the "ugly Israelis" who inhabit it.) In some instances they even go so far as to legitimize the calumnies directed at Israel by its enemies.[81]

CONCLUSION

The transformation taking place in American Evangelicalism is likely to have major consequences: Evangelical anti-Zionism, which was previously a marginal movement, will gain momentum and currency and if left unchallenged, could become a dominant voice in the Evangelical community, much in the way that anti-Zionism became a dominant position in the mainstream Protestant community.

Notes

1. Jody C. Baumgartner, Peter L. Francia and Jonathan S. Morris, "A Clash of Civilizations? The Influence of Religion on Public Opinion of U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East," Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 61, No. 2 (June, 2008), p. 177.

2. Michael Lipka, "More white evangelicals than American Jews say God gave Israel to the Jewish people," Pew Charitable Trust, 3 October 2013. Retrieved 8 October 2013, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/10/03/more-white-evangelicals-than-american-jews-say-god-gave-israel-to-the-jewish-people/.

3. "A Clash of Civilizations?," p. 177. The authors also report that aside from Judaism, "Evangelical affiliation is the only religious indicator that consistently influences public opinion on foreign policy issues."

4. Timothy P. Weber, On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Academic, 2004).

5. See Stephen Spector, Evangelicals and Israel: The story of American Christian Zionism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), Chapter Two for a summary of the various reasons why Christian Zionists support Israel.

6. There is some uncertainty about the number of Evangelicals in the United States. One credible estimate offered by the Gallup News Service, indicates that this community represents at least 30 percent of the American population. See Frank Newport and Joseph Carroll, "Another Look at Evangelicals in America Today," Gallup News Service, 2 December 2005. Retrieved 9 July 2012, http://www.gallup.com/poll/20242/Another-Look-Evangelicals-America-Today.aspx. Newport and Carroll report "There is no hard-and-fast definition of who "evangelicals" are in America

today. For practical purposes, one approach is to define evangelicals as white, non-Catholic Christians who agree that the label 'evangelical or born again' describes them. Recent survey data suggest that about three in ten American adults meet these criteria." This criteria invariably results in an underreporting of the overall strength in numbers of Evangelical Protestants by omitting the African American Evangelicals and a growing number of Latino or Hispanic Evangelicals in the U.S., many of whom support Israel.

7. Ari Morgenstern, "Christians United for Israel Crosses Million Member Mark," 19 March 2012. Retrieved 11 March 2013, http://www.cufi.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=11449.

8. Robert O. Smith, More Desired than Our Owne Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 12.

9. Jim Fletcher, "The Rise of the Anti-Israel Evangelicals," Frontpage Magazine, 20 February 2012. Retrieved 8 October 2013, http://frontpagemag.com/2013/jim-fletcher/rise-of-the-anti-israel-evangelicals/.

10. Blogger Joseph Weissman first coined the phrase, "Evangelical Intifada," in report published sometime in 2011. The report is available at http://seismicshock.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/the-evangelical-intifada.pdf (retrieved 8 October 2013).

11. The role that the Awad family and its allies have played in promoting anti-Zionism in American Evangelism is beyond the scope of this article, but a number of articles about the Awad's and the story they tell can be seen at camera.org.

12. The prepared text of the presentations offered at the 201 Christ at the Checkpoint Conference can be found at http://www.christatthecheckpoint.com/lectures/ (last accessed 24 September 2013).

13. Michael Hirsley, "The Word of God: Worshippers Follow it Through a Multitude of Religions in Du Paige County," Chicago Tribune, 23 October 1988.

14. Unless otherwise noted, the information about the 2012 Christ at the Checkpoint Conference is from Dexter Van Zile, "Israeli Jews, the Impossible People at Christ at the Checkpoint," Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, 11 April 2012. Retrieved 8 October 8, 2013, http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=2&x_outlet=118&x_article=2221. The author attended this conference.

15. Sandro Magister, "The May of Bethlehem is Christian, but It's Hamas That's in Charge," Chiesa 29 December, 2005. Retrieved 8 October 2013, http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/44202?eng=y.

16. Dexter Van Zile, "Denial Runs Deep in Hebron," Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America," 10 August, 2012. Retrieved 13 November 2013, http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=2&x_outlet=118&x_article=2284.

17. Author's files.

18. Email from Luke Moon, 8 October 2013.

19. Ardie Geldman, "Counter-Terrorism: Responding to Pro-Palestinian Protest and Solidarity Tours," New English Review, November 2013. Retrieved 7 November 2013, http://www.newenglishreview.org/custpage.cfm/frm/142230/sec_id/142230.

20. Information about the 2014 conference can be found at http://www.christatthecheckpoint.com/.

21. Dexter Van Zile, "The Mis-Education of a Young Evangelical," New English Review, October 2011. Retrieved 14 March 2013, http://www.newenglishreview.org/Dexter_Van_Zile/The_Mis-Education_of_a_Young_Evangelical/.

22. Jim Fletcher, "'Bethlehem' like you haven't seen it before," World Net Daily, 5 December 2011. Retrieved 8 October 8, 2013, http://www.wnd.com/2011/12/374717/.

23. Donald Miller, "The Painful Truth About the Situation in Israel," Storyline, 19 November 2012. Retrieved 8 October 2013, https://storylineblog.com/2012/11/19/the-painful-truth-about-the-situation-in-israel/.

24. Alexander H. Joffe, Bad Investment: The Philanthropy of George Soros and the Arab-Israeli Conflict (How Soros-funded Groups Increase Tensions in a Troubled Region, Gerald M. Steinberg, ed. NGO Monitor, May 2013. Retrieved 8 October 2013, http://www.ngo-monitor.org/soros.pdf.

25. There is more than one version of this letter. The first was published by the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good, as "An Open Letter to America's Christian Zionist," on 19 September, 2011 (Retrieved 18 March 2013), http://www.newevangelicalpartnership.org/?q=node/139. The second version, which emphasized the author's previous support for Israel was published at God's Politics, a blog written by Sojourner's CEO, Jim Wallis on 20 September, 2011. Retrieved 18 March 2013, http://sojo.net/blogs/2011/09/20/stassen-and-gushee-open-letter-christian-zionists.

26. For an analysis of the story told by mainline Protestant churches about the Arab-Israeli conflict, see Dexter Van Zile, "Mainline American Christian 'Peacemakers' Against Israel," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 5 November, 2009. Retrieved 13 November, 2013, http://jcpa.org/article/mainline-american-christian-peacemakers-against-israel/.

27. For a brief discussion of megachurches, see Scott Thumma, "Exploring the Megachurch Phenomena: Their characteristics and cultural context," Hartford Institute for Religion Research, N.D. Retrieved 13 November 2013, http://hirr.hartsem.edu/bookshelf/thumma_article2.html.

28. Warren Baird and Scott Thumma, "A New Decade of Megachurches: 2011 Profile of Large Attendance Churches in the United States," Hartford Institute for Religion Research, 2011. Retrieved 13 November 13, 2013, http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/New-Decade-of-Megachurches-2011Profile.pdf.

29. "Bethlehem—Caught in the Crossfire," (video). Uploaded to Vimeo in 2010. Retrieved 13 November 2013, http://vimeo.com/10721576.

30. In 2012, the Diyar Institute reported that "the number of the Christian population has grown ever so slightly in the past 50 years." The institute reports that in 1967, there were 42,494 Christians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and that in 2007 and 2008 there were 51,710 Christians living in these areas. See Palestinian Christians in the West Bank: Facts, Figures and Trends, Rania Al Qass Collings, Rifat Odeh Kassis, Mitri Raheb, eds. Diyar Institute, 2012, 10–11.

31. Fundamentalism derives its name and got it start from a series of booklets (titled The Fundamentals), published in the United States between 1910 and 1913 that propounded a conservative orthodox faith at the behest of two philanthropists from Los Angeles who, according to Sydney E. Alhstrom, desired to "arrest the drift" of Protestantism from its "old moorings" in the face of the growing popularity of theological liberalism. See Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 815–816.

32. Fundamentalists were in conflict on two fronts, reports Ahlstrom. First they were "engaged in an effort to prevent schools and universities from teaching scientific theories which were deemed incompatible with traditional interpretations of the Bible; and second, as an effort to block the advance of liberal theology and modern scholarship in the churches." (Ahlstrom, 909).

33. Christian Smith, American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 7. The Scopes Monkey Trial, which pitted the State of Tennessee against teacher John Scopes (accused of violating the state law prohibiting the teaching of evolution), proved to be a disaster for the Fundamentalists in the United States as it gave their critics fodder to portray the movement as anti-intellectual and hostile to science. In his coverage of this trial, H.L. Mencken mocked Fundamentalists for their belief "that learning is dangerous, that nothing is true that is not in the Bible, that a yokel who goes to church regularly knows more than any scientist ever heard of." (H.L. Mencken, A Religious Orgy in Tennessee: A Reporter's Account of the Scopes Monkey Trial, [New York: Melville House Publishing, 2006], Kindle Location 944.)

34. Smith, 8. Also, Timothy P. Weber reports that some premillenialists believed "The church's job was not to try to change the inexorable flow of history but to ride it out until these evil times had run their course," and as a result repudiated the Social Gospel. Other premillenialists "were willing to fight social evil if it was rooted in individual behavior and could be remedied primarily through personal transformation." Timothy P. Weber, On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend, 54–57.

35. Smith, 9.

36. For a description of Billy Graham's role in mainstreaming American Evangelicalism, See, Peter J. Boyer, "The Big Tent: Billy Graham, Franklin Graham, and the transformation of American evangelicalism," The New Yorker, Vol. 81, no. 24, 22 August, 2005.

37. Smith, 9–11. It should be noted that the Fundamentalists didn't disappear from the American scene. Some commentators, such as Smith, see Fundamentalists as separate and distinct from mainstream Evangelicalism. Other commentators, such as Gushee, appear to regard them as part of the Evangelical right.

38. Wendy Murray Zoba, The Beliefnet Guide to Evangelical Christianity (New York: Doubleday, 2005), Kindle location 159. Also see "Statement of Faith," National Association of Evangelicals (undated). Retrieved 6 March 2013, http://www.nae.net/about-us/statement-of-faith.

39. This characteristic can be seen in the controversy surrounding Rob Bell, author of Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell and the Fate of Every Person who Ever Lived (New York: HarperCollins, 2012), which critics assert posits a theology of universalism in which everyone—even non-Christians—gets to heaven through the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Numerous commentators have stated that this book makes arguments that effectively remove Bell from the fold of Evangelicalism. See Kevin DeYoung, "God is Still Holy and What you Learned in Sunday School is Still True: a Review of Love Wins by Rob Bell," The Gospel Coalition, 2001. Retrieved 7 March 2013, http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevindeyoung/files/2011/03/LoveWinsReview.pdf.

40. Gushee, 2008, 87.

41. For an analysis of Burge's animus toward Israel, see Dexter Van Zile, "Mainline Churches Embrace Gary Burge's Harmful Mythology," CAMERA, 11 September, 2007. Retrieved 28 February, 2013, http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=2&x_outlet=118&x_article=1371. See also Dexter Van Zile, "Israeli Jews: The Impossible People at Christ at the Checkpoint," Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting, 11 April 2012. Retrieved 7 March 2013, http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=2&x_outlet=118&x_article=2221. For a summary of Sizer's anti-Israel tendencies see Dexter Van Zile, "Stephen Sizer Complains to Police About Blogger," CAMERA, 1 February, 2010. Retrieved 28 February, 2013, http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=2&x_outlet=69&x_article=1793. For a summary complaints leveled at Christian

Zionism, see Stephen Sizer, "Seven Biblical Answers to Popular Zionist Assumptions," undated. Retrieved 7 March 2013, http://www.sizers.org/articles/7answers.pdf.

42. Stephen Spector, Evangelicals and Israel: The story of American Christian Zionism (New York, Oxford University Press, 2009 and Barry E. Horner, Future Israel: Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007). Note that while Horner's text offers a blistering response to Burge's supersessionism by affirming the permanent nature of God's promises to the Jewish people as they appear in scripture, it also propounds an explicit supersessionism asserting that Jews are enemies of the Gospel (pace Romans 11:28) who will die in their sin if they do not accept Jesus as Lord.

43. This was the overall message offered by Burge, Sizer and Manfred Kohl in their presentation at the Christ at the Checkpoint Conference which took place in Bethlehem in March, 2012. Their presentations can be found at http://www.christatthecheckpoint.com/. See, Dexter Van Zile, "Israeli Jews: The Impossible People at Christ at the Checkpoint," Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, 11 April, 2012. Retrieved 13 November 2013, http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=2&x_outlet=118&x_article=2221.

44. Barbara R. Rossing, The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 66–76. Rossing does not exhibit the same supersessionist contempt for Jewish sovereignty that Burge, Kohl and Sizer have exhibited in their writings.

45. Gershom Gorenberg, The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle For the Temple Mount (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

46. Hal Lindsey with C.C. Carson, The Late Great Planet Earth (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970).

47. This is a multivolume series written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins and published by Tyndale. The first of these texts is titled Left Behind: A Novel of Earth's Last Days. The books in this series offer a fictionalized account of the rapture and ensuing tribulations. This title has been a record-breaking best seller.

48. "For those who doubt the continuing domination of this way of thinking among Evangelicals, it is worth remembering the Gulf War of 1991. Within weeks of the outbreak of this conflict, evangelical publishers provided a spate of books featuring efforts to read this latest Middle East crisis as a direct fulfillment of biblical prophecy heralding the end of the world. [….] How did the evangelical public respond to these books? It responded by immediately vaulting several of these titles to the top of religious best-seller lists," writes Mark A. Noll, The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind (Grand Rapids: Wiliam B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), Kindle locations 244 and 252.

49. Glenn W. Shuck, Marks of the Beast: The Left Behind Novels and the Struggle for Evangelical Identity (New York: New York University Press, 2005), p. 3.

50. See Christian Smith, American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving (London, University of Chicago Press, 1998).

51. Smith, 34.

52. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008.

53. Ibid, 23–55.

54. Sojourners, Media Kid, August 2012 update, 3. Retrieved 14 March 2013, http://sojo.net/sites/default/files/SojournersMediaKitAug2012.pdf.

55. Gushee, 2008, 57–85.

56. Spector, Evangelicals and Israel: The story of American Christian Zionism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), Kindle Location 662.

57. Ibid, 89.

58. Ibid, 90.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid, 100–101.

61. There is another group relevant to this discussion—the "Emergent" or "Emerging" church, which is made up of baby boomers and millenials who are refugees from (and theological opponents of) the Evangelical Right. This movement, whose leaders have their roots in the Evangelical community, appears to be splitting off altogether from American Evangelicalism and creating a distinctive segment of American Protestantism and an alternative for young Evangelicals (described below) who have "grown weary of their tradition."

62. This familiar agenda can be discerned from a cursory examination of EMEU's website, http://www.emeu.net/. In particular, readers should pay close attention to the materials available at http://www.emeu.net/resources.html.

63. "Evanglical (sic) Writing on the Middle East Compiled by Dr. Gary Burge, Wheaton College," Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding, no date. Retrieved 14 March 2013, http://www.emeu.net/burge_bibliography_video.html.

(Note: The video was uploaded to Youtube on 8 February 2011 (http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=8OqrgJiIoxk#!).

64. Postmodernism, is a habit of mind or worldview that regards truth claims as cultural artifacts that may be accepted as "true" or operative within a particular society or cultural environment, but not as an expression of timeless, objective, universal truth. This cast of mind—which is being embraced by growing numbers of young people in the United States—is causing a great deal of foment in American religious life, Evangelicalism included. Some commentators, such as Brian McLaren are encouraging Christian leaders to adapt to postmodernism in books such as A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001) and A Generous Orthodoxy (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), that promote the creation of an "Emerging" church. Others commentators such as D.A. Carson, author of Becoming Conversant With the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), are working to hold the line against accommodation with postmodernism.

65. David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity … And Why It Matters (Baker Books, 2007). Young Christians, Kinnaman and Lyons report, feel they must "distance themselves from the current 'branding' of Christianity" in order to protect their ability to bring others into the faith." The authors report these young people "don't fear being unpopular, but they feel that raising the Christian flag would actually undermine their ability to connect with people and to maintain credibility with them."

66. David Kinnaman, You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church… And Rethinking Faith (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2011). Kindle Location 2777.

67. DeYoung, 2011.

68. John S. Dickerson, "The Decline of Evangelical America," The New York Times, 15 December, 2012. Retrieved 7 March 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/opinion/sunday/the-decline-of-evangelical-america.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&#.

69. See Robert Wuthnow, After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings Are Shaping the Future of American Religion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), chapters two and three.

70. Tobin Grant and Sarah Pulliam Bailey, "How Evangelicals Have Shifted in Public Opinion on Same-Sex Marriage and what President Obama's announcement could mean politically and legally," Christianity Today, May 2012 (web only). Retrieved Feb. 26, 2013, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/mayweb-only/evangelicals-shift-same-sex-marriage.html.

71. Ibid.

72. There are two strains of this movement: The Evangelical left and the emergent church. The Evangelical left wants to stay in the "Evangelical" fold, while others are willing to be drummed out of the movement.

73. Brian D. McLaren, "A 'farewell, Brian McLaren' moment, or not," brianmclaren.net, 8 October, 2012. Retrieved 18 March 2013, http://brianmclaren.net/archives/blog/i-read-recently-about-your.html.

74. Tony Campolo, "BBC Interviews Steve Chalke and I regarding Steve coming out in favor of committed, same-sex relationships," Red Letter Christians, 22 January 2013 (BBC interview). Retrieved 14 March 2013, http://www.redletterchristians.org/bbc-interviews-steve-chalke-and-i-regarding-steve-coming-out-in-favor-of-committed-same-sex-relationships/.

75. Lyons and Kinnaman, 2007, Kindle location 339 and Kinnaman, 2001, Kindle location 4359.

76. See Allison J. Althoff, "Hope for the Gay Undergrad: More and more groups connected with Christian colleges openly reach out to students with same-sex attractions," Christianity Today, January/February 2013, 17–19.

77. The Evangelical embrace of premillenial dispensationalism is another source of embarrassment, particularly for ordained clergy and theologians in the Evangelical movement, but it is not enough to drive people out of the community. Embarrassment over the community's stand on homosexuality is.

78. Tony Campolo, "Using the Red Letters of the Bible as Guides to Peace and Reconciliation," Christ at the Checkpoint, a presentation at Christ at the Checkpoint Conference given on 9 March 2012. Retrieved 14 March 2013, http://vimeo.com/38679340.

79. Shane Claiborne, "The Barriers that Divide," a presentation at the Christ at the Checkpoint Conference given on 5 March 2012. Retrieved 14 March 2013, http://vimeo.com/38585835. The polling data Claiborne was referring to was published in the previously cited book by Kinnaman and Lyons, Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity … And Why It Matters (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007).

80. Ibid.

81. It should be noted that such a response is not unique to American Evangelicalism. Jews for example, have responded similarly to the burdens placed on Jewish identity by decades of anti-Israel propaganda proffered by Arabs and Muslims in the Middle East by distancing themselves from the Jewish state and in some instances legitimizing the calumnies directed at it. This process has been outlined in Ruth Wisse's If I am not for

Myself… The Liberal Betrayal of Jews (New York: The Free Press, 1992) and Ken Levin's The Oslo Syndrome: Delusions of a People under Siege (New York: Smith and Kraus, 2005).

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